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Canada

Articles

CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM / MUSÉE CANADIEN DE LA GUERRE

Features

Other Matters

From the Editor-in-Chief

Oliver Haller, a graduate of Wilfrid Laurier University and Philipps-Universität Marburg, Germany, recently joined the Laurier centre. He originally wrote the paper presented here, on the bombing in late April 1945 of Hitler's Berghof (his alpine retreat) for a conference that focussed on the Berghof as a powerful site of "historical trauma" because of its uniquely intimate associations with the dictator. Oliver was able to deploy insights from his doctoral research on the early post-war Allied efforts to "demilitarize" German industry while trying to rebuild the civilian economy that had been shattered by the strategic bombing offensive. He discovered that before the end of the war concerns about German economic reconstruction had already begun to deepen doubts about continued strategic bombing, notably by Churchill and his principal advisors. Bomber Command's attack on even such a Nazi shrine as the Berghof did nothing to assuage those doubts.

Randy Wakelam, well known to most readers of the journal, delves into the literature on leadership of the Canadian Army during the Second World War. That literature was late in developing. Scholarly works did not begin to appear until the late 1980s, and a biography of General H.D.G. Crerar, Canada's top battle field commander, was published only in 2007. Still it says much for the rapid development of the field in recent years, not least by the Canadian Forces in efforts to meet the challenges of senior officer development in the post-Cold War world, that Randy is able to draw on a substantial body of work that brings to bear diverse perspectives. Still, as Randy warns in his conclusion, much remains to be done and his findings are preliminary, but nevertheless clear and striking.

Tim Balzer of the University of Victoria presents new research on how the Canadian Army notified next-of-kin and the public of casualties during the Second World War. It is hard to imagine a task in which even minor errors can cause such anguish. It was, as Tim shows, the few instances in which things went wrong that drew attention to this burdensome duty, and shaped procedures. The latter had to navigate any number of challenges, including limited communications in combat zones, the need to assure the security of information about ongoing military operations, and the policies of our Allies.

In the Canadian War Museum section, Sarah Cozzi's piece on hostels for Canadian troops on leave in London in 1915-1919 contributes to the museum's ongoing work into the experience of First World War soldiers behind the front. She also sheds new light on linkages between the home front and the overseas military effort that in turn drew on the close transatlantic personal ties of the Empire. The initiative for the establishment of the "Maple Leaf" clubs came from Lady Julia Drummond of Montreal, who joined hands with like-minded socialites in Britain, into which effort members of the royal family joined. The paper draws on Sarah's MA thesis for the University of Ottawa, and a presentation she gave at the annual Military History Colloquium where the audience immediately urged her to publish her results.

Since retiring from Cape Breton University, Brian Tennyson's research has focussed on Nova Scotia's experience in the First World War. Here he presents the first part of an unpublished history of the 25th Battalion completed by Robert Clements, a veteran of the unit, in the 1970s. The centre of the action is the Halifax Armouries where the unit was raised and trained before going overseas in May 1915. The gods of urban development have left the armouries and their environs largely intact, so anyone who knows Halifax will be struck by the familiarity of the setting as described in the text and captured in the photographs Brian and Mike located at the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. Those who love Nova Scotia and had the luck to rub shoulders with the First World War veterans in the province when they were still vigorous in the 1950s to 70s will also be struck by the manner in which Clements' prose captures the distinctive voice of those remarkable people.

Ed Storey, a regular contributor, was inspired by Caitlin McWilliam's piece on Canadian aircraft nose art in Bomber Command in our most recent issue. During his recent duty visit to Afghanistan Ed photographed and researched decorative art on the Canadian Forces CH-147D Chinook helicopters in theatre. Someone of my advanced "age and stage" can't help but shed a small tear that the Vargas pin-up images are no longer "appropriate," but the wit and spirit of the combat airmen is no less evident than it was 65 years ago.

Roger Sarty
February 2011

Dear sir,

Ed Storey's "Canadian Battlegroup Badges" (*Canadian Military History* vol 19, no.1, Winter 2010) is a useful introduction to the history of Canadian military insignia. Cloth patches and metal insignia have been used to identify and promote unit identity, enhance morale and esprit de corps in the Canadian army for over a century. Most studies of insignia in Canadian service have been relegated to militaria collecting fraternities.

Cloth insignia can be classified by the purpose of that insignia. Rank insignia identifies those with authority to command. Regiments, corps or branches were identified by shoulder titles and later by combat or Cadpat titles. Formation patches indicate units affiliated in larger military organizations. A derivative of formation patches is the tasking patch which identifies military groups formed to perform a specific role or duty or to participate in a short term exercise or operation. Another category of military insignia is the skill at arms or military proficiency insignia. These indicate specific military occupations, trades, skills or training achieved by the wearer. Each type has evolved during their use in the Canadian army.

Storey's "Canadian Battlegroup Badges" describes the use of formation patches during the First World War. The insignia were called battle patches by the Canadian Corps. Initially the patches were worn between the shoulder blades on the back of the tunic, but were moved to the tunic sleeves. Eventually, most units of the Canadian Corps would wear a battle patch. Canadian railway troops, under command of the British Expeditionary Force, conformed to the British practice of wearing the patch on the back.

The colours of the Canadian Corps battle patches changed during the war. Initially, the patches were red for the 1st Division, blue for the

2nd, white for the 3rd, and yellow for the 4th. The 3rd was changed to black, but due to confusion with the 2nd Division colour, it was finally changed to "French grey." The 4th finally selected a dark green colour. The 5th, commanded by Garnet Hughes, selected garnet, a distinctly purple hue compared to the maroon of the 5th Canadian Armoured Division in the Second World War.

In 1939, the Canadian army followed a policy of limited insignia on battledress, which initially only allowed rank badges. British Army Council Instruction No.419, May 1940, stated:

> Divisional signs or badges will not be worn by British divisions during the war…This policy will not apply to Dominion Divisions. Divisional Signs or badges may be worn by these formations at the discretion of the Dominion military authorities concerned.

In due course, a degree of autonomy was exercised by Canadian military authorities. The Canadian army adopted patching similar to those used by the Canadian Corps in the First World War. The cloth insignia evolved into a comprehensive system to identify the soldier's unit and formation at a quick glance. Many formation patches had "imposed" designations added, which identified a specific regiment, corps or service. In 1944, this policy was changed and all units were to wear a combination of cloth shoulder titles and plain formation patches. By war's end an observer could identify the rank, trade, unit and formation by a glance at the sleeve of the battledress.

Postwar, the 25 Brigade patch worn by Canadians in Korea, was later used as a nationality identifier on overseas and peacekeeping deployments. The Canadian maple leaf flag patch was later adopted for the same purpose.

Unification of the armed forces in 1968 again limited the use of insignia on CF uniforms. This policy eroded over time, and the Canadian Forces Land Element again began to wear cloth titles. Made in shades of gold embroidery on CF green, units acquired fully spelled out titles, and abbreviated titles for wear on various CF uniforms. Combat dress wore the OD tablet titles. Fully embroidered coloured shoulder titles were acquired by some units for the short-lived Garrison Dress (GD) uniforms. Many other GD titles were adopted from associated cadet corps. With the issue of cadpat uniforms a tablet title, on cadpat material, similar to combat, was adopted.

Brigades were granted permission to wear distinctive formation signs in the 1980s. Patches, for wear on the DEU, included the SSF, 1 Brigade, 4 Brigade and 5 Brigade. The SSF also had a patch for the jump smock. 2 Brigade, activated after the SSF was disbanded, obtained their formation patch in the mid-1990s, and the revived 1 Canadian Division took their red patch back into wear.

"Subdued" coloured brigade patches were issued for the GD uniforms. The 1990s reorganization of the reserve army into brigade groups led to the issue of full coloured brigade patches for those formations, which are still on issue.

Tasking patches have come into widespread use since the 1980s. Made for exercises, deployments and taskings, they are mostly un-official, and serve as formation identification, as morale patches, and as souvenirs. Issued for summer concentrations, exercises, deployments, like Bosnia and other peacekeeping missions, and now for Afghanistan, they are important symbols. With unofficial status, little has been recorded about their design, use or significance.

The systems of identification have evolved over the last century. Each time an insignia vacuum is created, by the adoption of a new uniform, or a deployment, soldiers adorn their uniforms with expressions of regimental distinction, professional training, and unit pride. The evolution of Canadian insignia offers a valuable insight into army organization and traditions. Documentation and analysis of the insignia history of the Canadian forces merits more attention.

Sincerely,
Bill Alexander

Errata: In the last issue of *CMH* (19, no.4 - Autumn 2010) the photos and caption on page 34 contained two errors. Brigadier James MacBrien, commander of 12th Brigade, was misidentified. The photo at left shows the complete original. MacBrien is on the right, General Arthur Currie is in the centre and Major William Stewart Wood, then acting commanding officer of the 38th Battalion, is on the left. In addition, Brigadier Edward Hilliam did not command 10th Brigade for the entire war, he was replaced in August 1917. Thanks to Geoff Jackson and Ken Reynolds for these observations.